

Hampden-Sidney College Library

CIRCULAR

OF

HAMPDEN SIDNEY COLLEGE.

[.1874.]

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At a late meeting of their body, the Trustees of Hampden Sidney College, resolved to secure if possible a large increase of the endowment of the College; and at a convention of elders and deacons of the Presbyterian Church subsequently held in the city of Richmond, not only was this action of the Trustees unanimously approved, but even a greater addition to the endowment was recommended than that they had proposed.

The time selected for this movement has been happily chosen. In 1875—next year—Hampden Sidney will have completed the hundredth year of her existence; and certainly the near approach of so interesting an epoch, brings with it a call to her friends to review her history and services, and to enquire what they ought to do to enhance her prosperity and to extend her usefulness.

Let us then consider some of the claims of this venerable College—claims founded on past services and present character—to the support of the people of Virginia and the ad-

jacent States, and especially to the support of the Presbyterian people living in the bounds of this Synod.

Hampden Sidney owes its distinctive character and existence mainly to two feelings; the one, a love of political freedom; the other a love of the Presbyterian Church.

The political feelings of the founders of the College reveal themselves in the very name it bears; for it is well known that the Whigs of '76 regarded their own principles as identical with the principles for which the opponents of the Stuarts had contended in the mother country, a hundred years before.

The same feeling appears again, and appears very conspicuously, in the following curious provision of the charter obtained by the College in 1783.

In the third article of that instrument it is enacted "that in order to preserve in the minds of the students that sacred love and attachment which they should ever bear to the principles of the present glorious Revolution, the greatest care and caution should be used in electing Professors and Masters, to the end that no person shall be so elected, unless the uniform tenor of his conduct manifests to the world his sincere affection for the liberty and independence of the United States of America."

During the war of Independence the same love of liberty and of country was displayed on every suitable occasion. In 1776, soon after the College was opened for the first time, a military company was formed from its students.

This company was placed under the command of Mr. John Blair Smith, then one of the tutors of the College and afterwards its President. Soon after its formation it was marched to Williamsburg and offered to the Governor of the State. Again in 1781, when Cornwallis was pushing Green from North Carolina into Virginia, Mr. Smith, now President, hastened to join the volunteers assembled to repel the advance of the enemy.

In our late civil war the old affection for the liberties and independence of Virginia again re-appeared among the stu-

dents of Hampden Sidney. At the first sound of war, before hostilities actually commenced, they made up a company among themselves, joined the forces of their native State and were among the first to feel the shock of battle. Nor have the Trustees of the College been wanting in the same spirit. At an early period of the contest they passed a resolution offering free tuition to every Confederate soldier maimed in the service and to the sons of Confederate soldiers slain in battle.

The Presbyterian attachments of the founders of Hampden Sidney, are sufficiently attested by the circumstances of her origin. Her foundations were laid by the old Presbytery of Hanover. At a meeting of this body held in '75 at Cub Creek, in Charlotte county, measures were taken for the establishment of the school by the appointment of a Board of Trustees and of a presiding officer, under the title of Rector or Superintendent. The appointment and removal of Trustees remained in the hands of the Presbytery until the incorporation of the school as a College by the General Assembly of the State.

Its removal from the direct control of ecclesiastical courts in no wise alienated the College from the Presbyterian Church. It still continued to be virtually, though not formally, a Presbyterian school. Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith, its first Rector, was transferred to the Presidency of Princeton College before the incorporation of Hampden Sidney. The place was filled by his brother, John Blair Smith. Mr. Smith was succeeded by Dr. Archibald Alexander, afterwards Chairman of the Faculty of Princeton Seminary, and he, by Dr. Moses Hoge, who was removed by death in 1820. All of these were gentlemen, not only of eminent ability, but distinguished for their devotion to the doctrines and government of the Presbyterian Church. Indeed, of the twelve persons who, under the title either of President or Vice-President, have presided at Hampden Sidney, ten have been Presbyterian ministers, and all but one communicants of the Presbyterian Church. And never was the

Presbyterianism of the Institution more pronounced than at the present moment. Every member of her Faculty and of her Board of Trustees is a Presbyterian and it is believed that the right of the Presbyterian Church to the control of the College is universally recognized.

But while this College is truly and unequivocally Presbyterian it is not offensively so ; any approach to bigotry or proselytism has always been discountenanced there. The temper of its founders is evinced by the following extract from a paper adopted by the Presbytery of Hanover in the very sessions at which the school was established. In this paper the Presbytery declare "that though the strictest regard should be paid to the morals of the youth, and worship carried on evening and morning in the Presbyterian way, yet on the other hand all possible care shall be taken that no undue influence shall be used by any member of this Presbytery, the Rector or any assistant, to bias the judgment of any ; but that all of every denomination shall fully enjoy their own religious sentiments and be at liberty to attend that mode of public worship that either custom or conscience makes most agreeable to them, when and where they may have an opportunity of enjoying it."

Nor was this declaration empty or unmeaning. Some years after, when one of the teachers of the school was accused of attempting to proselyte, there was a formal investigation of the charge by the Trustees, and it was only when its falsehood had been proven that the accused was acquitted of blame. Indeed at no time during her whole history do we find a particle of evidence that the authorities of Hampden Sidney have ever been justly chargeable with attempting to bring her students into the communion of the Presbyterian Church.

In accordance with the same catholic spirit is the equal liberality she has extended to candidates for the Christian ministry. Many years ago her Trustees formally resolved to give free tuition to every young man in preparation for the ministry in any evangelical church. They have likewise

authorized the Faculty to admit, on the same terms, any sons of ministers to whom, in their judgment, such a privilege ought to be accorded. As far as we know, the Faculty have never failed to respond favorably to any application for the admission of a pupil under either of the foregoing resolutions.

It might be expected that a College, founded and controlled by such men as established and governed Hampden Sidney, would prove a fruitful nursery of ministers for the various branches of the Church of Christ, and especially for the Presbyterian Church. Accordingly the records of Union Theological Seminary demonstrate that a greater number of the matriculates of that institution have studied at Hampden Sidney than at any other College or University whatsoever. Of the sixty young men now in the Seminary, twenty have been students at Hampden Sidney. A very considerably greater number than can be claimed by any other institution.

No inconsiderable proportion of the best ministers and members of the Presbyterian Church are indebted, under God, to a residence at Hampden Sidney for their religious life as well as for their literary training. These are among the precious fruits of the blessed revivals of religion with which, from its very foundation, this College has been so frequently visited. In one of these awakenings, for example, some eighteen or twenty students, a third of the whole number in the College, professed faith in Christ and united with the Church. And among these, besides some excellent ruling elders and private members, are, the following well known ministers of the gospel, all of whom are still in the midst of their usefulness: Rev. Drs. R. L. Dabney and M. D. Hoge, Rev. Messrs. James H. Fitzgerald, W. T. Richardson and Joseph M. Atkinson.

But whilst Hampden Sidney has given a far greater number of preachers of the gospel to the Presbyterian Church than to any other, she has furnished excellent men to the pulpits of several denominations. The Methodist, Baptist

and Episcopal churches have all drawn ministers from her Alumni. Of the clergy of the Episcopal Church particularly, now engaged in active labors, some eight or ten, including one of her Bishops, were students of this College.

But the benefits conferred by Hampden Sidney on the Presbyterian Church are not confined to the supply of ministers. From its very foundation this old College has been a sort of fortress of Presbyterianism, the power of which has been felt in all the surrounding country. To this influence mainly we must attribute the peculiarly strong hold taken by this Church on Prince Edward and the adjoining counties, especially Charlotte and Cumberland. These were not settled originally like some parts of the Valley, by emigrants from Presbyterian communities, and though at an early day they were the scene of the labors of distinguished Presbyterian ministers, they do not appear to have been more favored in this respect than other parts of the State where Presbyterianism was once flourishing, but has now nearly or quite died out.

This venerable Seminary of learning has performed an important part in advancing the secular, as well as the religious interests of the country. She has trained able men for every honorable profession and for every department of public service. Her Alumni have been represented, once in the Presidency of the United States, repeatedly in the Cabinet at Washington, and in the Senate and House of Representatives, and are found among the Governors of six or eight States of the Union. They have appeared in the Judiciary, both State and Federal, and among the ministers of the United States at foreign courts.

The contributions to the corps of professional educators have been peculiarly rich and extensive. Many of her sons are now found at the head of important institutions of learning, male and female, in Virginia and other States, or are Professors in some of the most distinguished Colleges and Universities in the country. At least seven of them still living, are now, or have been, the presiding officers of Col-

leges or of Seminaries of learning of still higher grade. The institutions referred to, are the University of Virginia, the University of Alabama, Union Theological Seminary, Davidson College, N. C.,—the last three, Presidents of which were all Alumni of Hampden Sidney—Stewart College, Tenn., and Hampden Sidney itself.

Now, in order to estimate the true value of the instruction at Hampden Sidney, it ought to be remembered that an institution which has sent out so many men of ability and usefulness has never boasted a great number of students. At no one time, we believe, have her pupils exceeded a hundred and fifty, and the average number during the whole term of her existence would scarcely reach half that sum.

A few words respecting some points of difference between the organization and system of instruction adopted at this College and those preferred by some sister institutions. Hampden Sidney is simply a College, sharply discriminated at once from the University and from the Academy and Classical school. As distinguished from the University, she provides no post graduate course, nor is any professional school taught under her charter. What was once her Theological department now exists as Union Seminary, an Institution in her immediate neighborhood, but entirely distinct from the College, both in its instruction and its government.

What was once her Medical School, taught under her charter, is now known as the Medical College of Virginia, and is wholly independent of her control.

Nor does she combine with her proper functions, those of the academy or classical school. She has no department for the preparation of youth for the regular College classes, but this work of preparation she thinks is best to leave to the classical schools of the country.

No doubt it is true that in this virtual exclusion from her instruction, both of professional and of preparatory students, Hampden Sidney submits to a very serious diminution of numbers. If the sixty students of the Theological Semi-

nary and the forty students of the Medical College at Richmond, were added to her roll, and if there should be a farther addition of some fifty or a hundred boys who might be gathered into a preparatory department, the dimensions of her catalogue would be greatly enlarged.

And yet, there are considerations which seem to justify her in this voluntary sacrifice of numbers.

In the judgment of many, one of the most marked defects of the American system of education is the want of a proper gradation of schools. The mere boy not advanced beyond the very rudiments of learning—the youth in the midst of his classical course and the young man engaged in professional studies are often thrown together to be taught by the same instructors and to be subjected to the same discipline.

Now, although this system has the sanction of high authority and prevails in some institutions of deservedly high repute, it is hard to see its superior advantages, except as it evidently conduces to the single end of the increase of numbers. The discipline best adapted to a boy of twelve, is not that most appropriate to a young man of five and twenty. Nor would the sort of teaching most suitable for the one of these be equally suited to the other.

That division of labor which has wrought out such magnificent results in physical science and the mechanic arts might yield good fruit, if introduced more extensively into the noble art of education.

A great difference of opinion has existed among the most distinguished educators respecting the expediency of maintaining a College Curriculum.

Many oppose the Curriculum upon the ground of the temptation it brings at the close of each session, to pass students to a higher class who have not mastered the studies appropriated to the lower, and at the end of the whole course to give a diploma which attests a scholarship not possessed.

It is alleged that this evil practice has been carried so far in some famous Colleges that their diplomas can only be re-

garded as receipts in full—for the College bills of the four years course.

And the elective system is unquestionably best adapted to the University. For the University student is, or ought to be, a young man considerably advanced in learning and with a definite purpose in life. Such a person may be presumed to be able to select intelligently and wisely his own course of study.

But against the elective system as applied to the College it is argued with great force, that students, on their entrance into College, are in no wise qualified to select their own course of study. That the selection is made upon wrong grounds, and that even when proper branches of study are chosen, they are taken up without due regard to a proper order. Sometimes young men who know no Greek and little Mathematics, commence their course with the study of Mental and Moral Philosophy, and thus begin where they should end. Now, at Hampden Sidney a system has been adopted not liable to either of these objections. She retains the Curriculum, but at the close of each term she only advances to a higher grade such of her students as have successfully passed a fair but rigid examination on all the studies of the lower classes. If the young man seek a degree he must not then take that course which is best in his own eyes, or most pleasing to his own taste, but that marked out for him by persons who have spent the best part of their lives in the work of education. The results of this system must be regarded as eminently favorable. While the standard of education at Hampden Sidney is as high and is maintained as inflexibly as in any mere College in the country, the number of her graduates has been unusually large when compared with the number of her students.

But there is a great practical question to which everything heretofore said is simply introductory. It is this: Ought the aid to be granted to this College which is asked by her Trustees? Indeed, ought she not to receive the more liberal provision recommended by the Richmond Convention?

In our judgment these questions admit only of an affirmative reply.

Two propositions seem so manifest as to need no proof. The first is, that the Presbyterians represented in the Synod of Virginia ought to have a College of their own—their own in the same sense in which Randolph Macon is the College of the Methodists, and Richmond College is the College of the Baptists. The second proposition is that this College of the Presbyterians should possess all the means and facilities of bestowing the most thorough and complete education that the College as distinguished from the University can be expected to afford.

Now, to give Hampden Sidney such advantages, it is very certain that at least three hundred thousand dollars must be added to its funds.

The sum proposed seems, indeed, a large one to be raised among our poor people, and to men accustomed to such estimates as were made fifty years ago of what would constitute an adequate endowment for a College it would appear extravagant. There has certainly been a wonderful enlargement of view among the people of this country with respect to the whole matter of intellectual culture. In almost every department the standard of education has been greatly raised. In our higher Seminaries of learning the course of studies has become far more comprehensive—the number of instructors has been increased and the outlay in libraries, philosophical apparatus, cabinets and buildings, wonderfully enlarged. Consequently a sum which a hundred, or even fifty years ago, would have been regarded as affording a respectable endowment, must now be esteemed ridiculously inadequate, and in this day we frequently hear of additions to the funds of literary institutions which, as lately as thirty years ago, would have seemed incredible. We have it on the authority of President White, of Cornell University, that within the last seven years, one million six hundred thousand dollars has been contributed to that Institution.

As we have been lately assured by one of its Professors, the Methodist University of Syracuse, at but a little distance from Cornell, has received seven hundred thousand dollars in five years. We have likewise the statement of Dr. McCosh that since his accession to the Presidency of Princeton College, eleven hundred thousand dollars has been added to the funds of that venerable seat of learning, And so to Lafayette College, Penn., besides large gifts from other persons, donations to the amount of five hundred thousand dollars have been received from a single individual, Mr. Pardee.

The foregoing are only a few notable instances among very many of a similar character of liberality exhibited to literary institutions North of the Potomac. Nor have the Southern States, or our own Virginia, been wanting in the exhibition of the same spirit. Notwithstanding the impoverishment of our people, the contributions made of late to Washington and Lee University have reached several hundred thousand dollars.

Peace had scarcely been restored before the Baptists of Virginia undertook to raise one hundred thousand dollars for Richmond College. They succeeded; but encouraged rather than satisfied with this success, they resolved soon after to add the farther sum of three hundred thousand dollars to the endowment of that College, and to the high honor of the zeal and energy of the denomination, this too, has been nearly accomplished. And yet, after all such accessions to their wealth, the richest of American Seminaries of learning are poor, compared with many of their sister institutions in Europe.

But are any commensurate advantages to be derived from giving riches to literary institutions? Does the wealth of a College make students or professors work harder or more successfully? Can money supply the lack of brains or energy? We reply that to the highest and most complete success in education something is necessary besides brains and energy. Libraries are necessary, laboratories are necessary,

philosophical apparatus of every kind is necessary. And all these are gotten for money. Indeed it must be admitted that with rare exceptions the best talent is secured by the best salaries.

When the poverty by which Hampden Sidney has always been oppressed, is taken into account, we can only wonder that she has been able to accomplish so much. Her present endowment is only some eighty-five thousand dollars, even counting her Virginia bonds at par, and yet she has more money to-day than ever before, except at one period of the late civil war, when, for a little while, she was in the possession of funds, the value of which was destroyed with the Confederacy. But in these days of large endowments it is sufficiently evident that without an important addition to her resources she cannot maintain that place among the Colleges of the country which she has long occupied.

Among her most pressing wants are the following: First, two additional Professorships, together with an increase of the salaries attached to the Chairs already established. The Professorships now existing at Hampden Sidney are five—one of Moral Science, one of Natural Science, one of Mathematics, one of the Latin language and one of the Greek language. For the present, instruction in German is committed to the Professor of Latin, and instruction in French to the Professor of Greek.

Now a great need of the College is the establishment of a Professorship of the English Language and Literature.

One of the most favorable changes that have appeared of late in the course of studies generally adopted in our American Colleges is the increased attention bestowed upon the study of the English. Certainly the knowledge of no other language can be so important as the knowledge of ones mother tongue, especially if that tongue possess a literature so rich and varied as our English. Instruction in this language should be something more than the elementary teaching bestowed in primary schools and academies. It ought to be extensive and thorough. Commencing where it now

commences with a mother's instruction of her children, but only ending where the whole work of education is terminated. So obvious are these views and so rapidly are our American people waking up to their recognition that it may be safely predicted that in a very few years scarcely a College worthy of the name will be found in which the teaching of the English language will not be a prominent branch of instruction.

Again, in this age when the intercourse of men of different nationalities is becoming so much more intimate and extensive than of old—the study of the living languages of other lands is assuming a new importance.

Acquaintance with some of these is even now almost indispensable to the character of an educated man.

At Hampden Sidney this fact has already been so far recognized that, as just intimated, provision is made for the instruction of her students in French and German.

Still it may be doubted whether a sufficient prominence is given to these studies. They are not indispensable to the attainment of the highest honors of the College, nor do they form an independent department of instruction, but it is wholly optional with the student whether he will study them or not, and they severally form incongruous additions to other departments.

Once more; the buildings and grounds of Hampden Sidney demand a liberal appropriation. Little has been expended upon them for many years and thus they exhibit painful indications of neglect. Yet the natural advantages of the site are not small and the outlay of a moderate sum would render the whole place beautiful and attractive.

But we need new buildings as well as the remodelling and improvement of those already existing. Even with the present number of our Faculty the erection of another Professor's house is imperatively demanded, and of course every addition to our corps of instructors may be expected to bring with it the necessity of an additional dwelling.

Our lecture and recitation rooms, too, and the apartment

now used for the purposes of a library, are all inconvenient and inadequate, and should give place to others more suitable.

But we need books perhaps more urgently than we need buildings. The literary societies of the College have indeed good collections of miscellaneous works, but these libraries can boast of but few books of much scientific value. The College library was originally designed for the use of the Divinity Class, at one time taught by the President. It consists mainly of Theological works and of public documents sent from Washington. For many years past it has received no additions by purchase and few of much value by donation. Were it not for the courtesy of the authorities of Union Theological Seminary, the Professors of the College would be nearly destitute of books of reference except so far as these could be supplied from their own scanty collections.

The wonderful progress in Natural Sciences causes a constant demand for new means of illustration, including philosophical apparatus, cabinets, maps, charts, &c.

Here again a considerable expenditure of money is demanded to make our collections what they ought to be.

And, lastly, the salaries of our teachers ought surely to be increased. They are now far smaller than those given by most of our sister institutions in Virginia, to say nothing of the wealthier Colleges of the North. They are indeed wholly and confessedly inadequate.

At a moderate estimate of the cost of the various additions and improvements above mentioned it must amount to at least three hundred thousand dollars, the sum named by the Richmond Convention, as that which the friends of Hampden Sidney ought immediately to raise. It is indeed a large sum to procure in these hard times and among our depressed people, but surely the urgency of the case demands the effort and the noble example of our forefathers in establishing this College encourages us to make it. For few and feeble as the Presbyterians of Virginia may feel

themselves to be when compared with the members of other churches, or with the Presbyterians resident in other States, we have far greater numbers and far better means of making money than were possessed by the men who founded Hampden Sidney. Indeed, it may be safely assumed that the Presbyterians of Virginia are five times more numerous to-day than in 1775. The difficulty of raising any considerable sums of money was then immensely greater than at present. Judging from the articles of agreement made between the Rev. James Waddell and his congregation in 1779, the price of a bushel of wheat was then about three shillings of Virginia currency, or fifty cents, and that of a bushel of corn was two shillings. About the beginning of the 17th century the price of tobacco per hundred was ordinarily two dollars and a half, and we doubt whether during the first sixty years of the history of Hampden Sidney the average price of this article was half that it now bears. Forty years ago labor and farm stock bore a small proportion to their present price.

At about that time a good farm horse could be purchased at sixty dollars, and a young man, an average plantation hand, could be hired at from forty to fifty-five dollars a year. Fifty dollars could only be gotten for men of extraordinary capabilities and high character.

Is the three hundred thousand dollars which Hampden Sidney now asks—a greater sum to be raised by us in these days—than was the amount contributed by her founders and the friends who upheld her in the days of her struggling infancy?

The advantages of this College, too, are unquestionably great and powerfully recommend her to support. The locality in which she is placed is unsurpassed in health. Her associations with the past are of priceless value. The scholarships she gives is as high as that conferred by any mere College in the country.

The moral and religious influences she throws around her students are peculiarly salutary. In times past she has been

visited by many precious outpourings of God's Spirit, and that Spirit has not yet been withdrawn.

Now shall such an institution be crippled for want of funds? Shall her instructors be left to discouragement and faintness of heart produced by the apparent failure of their brethren to give them sympathy and their real failure to give them help? It is for you who are addressed to determine.

J. M. P. ATKINSON,

Chairman of Committee of Endowment.

THOMAS S. FLOURNOY,

Chairman of Committee of Elders' Convention.